AUTHORS STIRRED UP BY CRITICISM OF AMERICAN FICTION

its readers exactly how successful American writers in syday feel about such criticism endeavors as was typiffed in linerited from this father and crammed inherited from this father and crammed inheritance.

Short Story as Written Here Compared inheritance in the control of the calls in my home, and while it was a clinical inheritance in the control of the control of the calls in my home, and while it was

Repent level in this country.

2. Name the half dozen novels write

since 1900 which you consider the some American novels of this time which you most admire. Do you find the American novel in general improving or deteriorating? What in your spinion is the reason for any change? 3. Name a few great novelists dead prior to 1900 whose attitude, method and style, applied unchanged to new material, would secure them a living were they to begin their careers tolay. Name others, comparatively re-

4. Has the ascendency of plot and sarrative interest and with the most rious writers of didactic "message" your opinion tended to destroy tyle? Do you consider the decline of iscious stylistic elegance a help or harm to the novel?

5. How many and which contempoary writers in the English language you find to base their work on a penuine natural history of man? Do you consider fine psychological analy-is a higher mode of art than fine ronance which does not pretend to em-

6. Is the characteristic work of O. lanry a beneficent model to hold beers the beginning short story writer? It is noticeable that the writers of the older brigade were disposed to en-int under Mr. Brownell's gonfalon. reas the newer ones swore great aths and flashed their blades in vio-

mming up the returns in to date with outlying precincts and Indiana sing, it appears that American fic ion is going to the dogs and up to the star; that it is a painful subject ind those who think so are pareties; sat style is dead and may it received that oatmeal is the proper diet.

And yet what happened the experimental or a writer and more can be bought. I stopped writing little experimental essays and wrote a real story? I essays and wrote a real story? I hat style is dead and may it rest in my future. ras a very great artist and one of him se enough, if not too many.

In short, the outcome is doubtful. be two conflicting forces, would seem be a tendency of American fiction nue in the present tenor of its sy, and of American opinions to con-

re are the opinions of the authors

Progress Due to Rebels. By GERTRUDE ATHERTON.

Mr. Brownell's bitter protest against American fiction of the day is as cainst his cocksure-dictums. We ed stanch old wheelhorses and we seed flory leaders.

Civilization is made up of conservawhat the good old wheelhorses of ime, as of all times, never seem and Boston. to crasp is that without the rebels, rs, there would be no progress. ok back over history and visualed. Read the history of literature and make a collection of authors ribes against the audacious spirits, or he merely original; note what is far worse, the allent scorn to which they were treated. To-day they are the pride themselves upon their erudition btanch conservatism-lack the courlight, to proclaim the ultimate triumph a strongly diverging talent or of a

concerned, to follow meticulously in he footsteps of established luminaries. If the newcomers have a resaible. They are standardized ut nething more than safe.

They are a new rock of strength to he old guard, who look with sincere mires sorror upon a rapidly growing class to the limbo yawning for victorious nti-suffragists, prudes and snobs. They therefore ring the changes upon sonvention, in the twofold hope of ensouraging more imitations and mould-

the public taste. They might as well try to check the ising tide of democracy. The public, The writers persistently upheld by the guardians are always so lacking in riceless gift of personality that the terest of his or her literary offerdepends entirely upon the choice of subject. O. Henry, who was unathwhom these ared magazines and m these anxious watchdogs still bark at in spite of the uncontroverthis careless independence but beising behind every line. As for style.

man that no writer can go. ers are afflicted with cleverness. carry let losse by the old guard of critters if they could be brought to realize that with writers of decided tendental that writers are decided overpowering help."

In one way or another everybody real decided overpowering help—a great. I have greatly admired in America to his mind, expending the decided overpowering help—a great. I have greatly admired in America to his mind, expending the decided overpowering help—a great. I have greatly admired in America to his mind, expending the decided overpowering help—a great. I have greatly admired in America to his mind, expending the decided overpowering help—a great. I have greatly admired in America to his mind, expending the decided overpowering help—a great. I have greatly admired in America to his mind, expending the decided overpowering help—a great. I have greatly admired in America to his mind, expending the decided overpowering help—a great. I have greatly admired in America to his mind, expending the following t

Its readers exactly in the seek heyday feel about such criticism of their endeavors as was typified in the recent paper by William Cray.

We grandfather had an old library flows all theme, first hamerican Academy and the Naroter, more in plot than in charten the following questions. The sum of the American Academy and the Naroter, more in plot than in charten the following questions. The sum of the first the first and Letters, which is a sum of a phrase than by the humor of a situation of the first of the mer of a phrase than by the humor of a situation of the mer of a phrase than by the humor of a situation of the mer of a control of the mer of a control of the mer of a control of the mer of a phrase than by the humor of a situation of the mer of a control of the mer of a control of the mer of a control of the mer of a phrase than by the humor of a situation of the mer of the m

over in good shape. In England, out-side of Kipling and Conan Doyle, Chadwick was. there are mighty few men who command any such figures."

ter humorist who has written one and did it wonderfully. He loved a pun masterpiece of horror, was suggestive, so well that you find him sticking as it was later when, speaking of the a bad one into the middle of a good ephemeral nature of professional hu-story. And how many of his charac-

"O. Henry was a master of all the

day, apply their styles unchanged to of Henry James or Dickens, modern material. The big authors of The only sense in which O. Henry public into recognition of their work. way. Go thou and do likewise. If they lived to-day they would do it again. Dickens would not, probably, Mrs. Andrews's Viewpoint. O. Henry seems to me the work write like Dickens, because he would have sense enough to know that Dickens's method and style were used up and antique. Dickens, beginning to-day, might write like O. Henry,

Intellectually that means nothing worse than juvenility, and we may outgrow it. More serious is the fact, to be in the fact, to fact, in the fact, to be in the fact, to fact, in the fact, to be in the fact, to fact, in the fact and, cost thought the general American superiority was accounted for in good men in America could have done part by the better prices which successful writers receive for their work here.

"In this country," he observed, "\$500 many of his terms and refersionly a medium price for a single is only a medium price for a single story, if the writer's work is getting from now will have to have a glossary.

"In this country," he observed, "\$500 men in America could have done of conditions" novels and are about to great not because he wrote in a certain write more of them. Churchill is an great not because he wrote in a certain distribution.

"So many of his terms and refersion of his terms and

modern material. The big authors of earlier days were all shocks. They should be made a model for the begin-threw a new style or a new method ning short story writer is this: O. worthy, a Stephens, a William nand any such figures."

parlor tricks. He was a juggler with into the public face and shocked the Henry did something new in a new Locke?

His enthusiasm for Jacobs, a masswords. He loved to play with them public into recognition of their work, way. Go thou and do likewise.

Have

> A stern categorical criticism was sible model. He had inventionable to be expected of Mrs. Mary A stern categorical criticism dramatic institution hardly to be expected of Mrs. Mary newspaper sense and an ignoral hardly to be expected of Mrs. Whose the inexpected twist. Raymond Shipman Andrews, whose the unexpected twist. engaging way of telling a tale seems create a character? Ind 4 always to install her reader costly in a any fresh or real install

"I have strong feelings against most the pictures of Have and The problem novels and the stories which not only hold up the seamy side to be looked at but rub the seams into or true, though unimportant, he

one's anatomy,
"I dislike generally what are called 'strong' tales, which howl and clamor that a spade is several spades. It is a mystery to me why a lot of modern mystery to me why a lot of modern trophe must be inevitable. writers and readers seem to think nothing true to life unless it is unsavory. Surely there is at least as much goodness as viciousness and uncleanness in humanity. A lot more, to my mind.

my mind.

"Surely it's better psychology to hold up lovely things to copy than ugly things to avoid. A positive suggestion find in American better the control of the contr

is stronger than a negative.

"As for style and didacticism, don't we need both? Wells couldn't be Stevenson, nor vice versa, but the world is big enough for the two, and

"The Germans are mosters their million understudies. In my soul philosophic novel I like that beautiful medium, words, to be beautifully used, and not made merely a Ford runabout—so I read And the American beautifully with the constitution of the c Wells less easily than somebody with more of an ear for language music."

Something to Say, the Need

Most of us are more concerned with Promotive to the concerned with



THOMPSON BUCHANAN

world in the pages of the Atlantic

Monthly. Nor did I for one moment

dream that any other destiny shaped

present fiction prices than could be essays and wrote a real story? I found myself the natural product of much a vogue in England just now— California. a shockingly new State. which snapped its fingers in the face of the East and all its traditions.

plastic mind, its atmosphere impregnated my being to the core. Not that I learned much of the real California in my home. My grandfather was a pillar of the church and never men-tioned "early days" any more than he would have hunted out old blankets full of scarlet fever germs and shaken them in my face. We had family prayers twice a day, grace before meals, and Sunday school and church were my protesting lot. My ancestors on both sides were from New York and New England.

When I began to write for publication I was as anxious to please my grandfather as to follow along the only lines I knew. And yet when the first story burst out of my callow skull it violated every tradition, it expressed myself, a section of the country that at the fluid impulses between. was rabidly new and might never have held communication with New York

It was by no means worth the exindependents, the adventurers and ecration it received, save indeed as a value and as crude as paint. But the the sort of reading it would make point is that it was inevitable, and so is much of the literature so fiercely denounced-but no! I exaggerate: flercely is no word to apply to the gengreat" and famous in their little day. tiemen of the Institute and Academy; of life means the study and portrayal! "Try to read Bill Ne's stuff, or Ar-1

ber only two, and, come to think of it. vaudevillism of speech, out, owing to the reactionary quality I stumbled on them by myseif. Herof their intellects—inseparable from bert Spencer, now repudiated, said one edly reflect the tastes of that country, ct's imagination.

far as critical recognition function of imaginative work as the are told to give the public what the and Miss Dana Gatlin, a newcomer in lifting of apparently ordinary charac- public wants. ters out of their monotonous round and That our fiction is less artistic than prospects he spoke with unreserved sible. They are standardized at lar drama. Although a good many were published twenty-five years ago guage, are "Ethan Frome." The Gentles and them, and years have passed since then I have or fifty years ago.

That there is more striving after New." "An Outcast of the Islands."

world without end. There is no in- man who takes his art seriously has a servative watch dog. But he has his these days. place. Do not be too severe on him. And yet even our severest critics ad-And where would the supreme adven- mit that some American writers are ture of the literary life be if we did doing good work. Who are they not have him to fight, and the glory. Writers know. Do readers? in time, makes up its own mind, to say nothing of the fun, of achieving our ambitions in spite of him?

Readers to Blame. By EDWIN LEFEVRE.

discussion is that about the narrow thought conducted by the questionbark at in spite of the uncontrovert-vision and superficiality of our fiction naire is Irvin Cobb. foremost critic tells us the worst-be- in advance, and had noted some opin-

In one way or another everybody rel of a seventy-five centimeter cigar.

write. I will teach myself to write is American readers. Writers are ingly upon that of W. M. Jacobs. But forced to be clever in order to write in general, more writers in America. That is in the least amenable to critical for people who don't think but wish to than in any other nation were turning influence and advice. be amused. Excepting in industrial out stories of a notably high grade.

phrasing and not infrequently shot off mean when he calls a man a "great men, like Chemens, have done the with the popular of epigram." He means a caricature, a thing so it lasts."

memorable thing; that style should be Our novels are what they are not Among the American leaders he the expression of the subject treated alone because their writers are mentioned Tarkington. Harry Leon at the moment, not a uniform to fit Americans but because their readers Wilson, George Ade, to whose early smiles, tears, sunsets and tornadoes, are Americans. Our novelists write and now neglected short stories he is Somewhere in Taine's "History of En- for money—as Thackeray and Dickens partial; Mary Raymond Shipman An-Therefore is it the shortest cut to glish Literature" he speaks of the and Scott did-because all Americans drews, Mrs. Deland, Mrs. Rhinehart

creating for them situations that would it used to be I doubt. There are more enthusiasm. pectable talent for the story and do develop their latent possibilities for short stories published to-day that a His favorite novels since 1990, re-their work nicely fallure is practically good, evil, greatness or even spectacp. Frenchman would call notable than stricting choices to the English lan-

likely to keep a writer out of quag- cleverness is the fault of the readers. and in some measure of G. Henry-the Wives' Tale," "Ruggles of Red Gap," To return to the Brownells, Phelpses, most pernicious influence that Ameriof writers to whom standards are mere Mables and all the conscientious rest, can letters has had in my lifetime—the Aready." He finds the continuous superstitions, to be relegated they make interesting reading and worse even than the high prices paid novel in general improving. they do no more harm than good. As by the popular periodicals, lietween it ever has been so it ever shall be O. Henry and the American public the the virtues of every recruit to the old sight, no foresight, in the old con-slim chance to earn enough to live on ple do now. His characters talked

The most tiresome of all literary most readily aboard the train of talker in a million."

ration falls him; not only because his careless independence but being that the high dependence but being the him expendence but being the him the hilf dozen novels I have most their work on a genuine natural his-second raters and that England and called "An the hilf dozen novels I have most their work on a genuine natural his-second raters and that England and called "The Belled Buzzard," and a teresting and conceivable happening all the time, he found the strength of the American novelists. Tarkington, are men of talent and insight and "are men of talent and be created his own style, and higher tistic conscience." &c. And now our Mystic—had received the conundrums It would be a great saving of the cause it is the truth: Our fiction writ- ions on the margirf, which opinions he

man place the blame impartially.

Now it must be plain to everybody be sure, there were illustrious English are Conrad, George Moore, Hardy and I have the lady's name right), "Cap'n we have had to go to England and the The buyers of our dollar and a quaravail nothing. It is only the clever un-gifted mind that says to itself, "I will that the trouble with American writers names, among which he dwelt relish-

denounced with satire and righteous of character. temus Ward's, to-day, How weirdly indignation but always in mellifluous. What does the average American outlandish it seems! One or two

GERTRUDE ATHERTON'

Of all those early precepts so con- man who interests him by amusing A slight reverential change of voice dols of our keen old watchdogs, who cientiously pounded into me I remem- him with eccentricities of behavior or upon the name of "Clemens," with whom Mr. Cobb has been compared,

the field, of whose present work and

His favorite novels since 1900 re-"The Mummer's Wife," "The Dark Forest," "The Boss of Little Aready." He finds the American

Thackeray, he thought, would suc- acters, no. They don't live." cood should Thackeray begin to-day. Thackeray saw and felt life as peo-

Here, too, the caller slipped in a

the civilised world, may be read with Balgacs or Tolstoys because geniuses Sergeant Jimmy Bagby—who also, be Meredith doesn't get him very hard. Say it.

There are many English writing corsively, without thought, intention we may be read with Balgacs or Tolstoys because geniuses Sergeant Jimmy Bagby—who also, be Meredith doesn't get him very hard. Say it.

I have a very poor memory for titles, novelists here and around who base or prescribination as though the novel. It have a very poor memory for titles, novelists here and around who base or prescribination as though the novel. Either the work on a genuine natural his is taken to the work on a genuine natural his is taken to the work on a genuine natural his is taken to the work of the work on a genuine natural his is taken to the work of the work

Mr. Howells. He considers fine psychological analysis the higher art, but
thinks its summits will never enjoy

Canan."

Conquest of ginning to operate. We have had too.

The law of supply and demand is beginning to operate. We have had too.

to think of it? The story, yes, the plot, don't want puts made of imported, very good stories in ten years, but he the turn of the ending. But the char-acters, no. They don't live." Knoth, but brains that can take the or she is not then; in have ten most black soil of the banks of the lows sages worth delivering turn sets of River and mould it into anything from the stack of the banks.

ple do now. His characters talked naturally, whereas those of Scott, Bulwer, the Brontes, &c., talked a literary
dialogue of which no real person would be capable.

Followed some observations on the Glass, Buth McEnery Stuart, Tarking
Pollowed some observations on the Glass, Buth McEnery Stuart, Tarking
By ELLIS PARKER BUTLER.

I think the last thing be worry about latients of the same of the world latients of the wo

COBB

I will be egotistical, as it is a short cut toward illustrating my point. I was practically valsed on the Atlantic Was practically. That and the Nation were without the average American is being elaborated character sketches.

What is an incentive to voice culture with the average in matters of course, when a matter suggested something to many American is able to say whether they are improving ing. The plot sense has been to what a short they are improving ing. The plot sense has been to what a short they are improving ing. The plot sense has been to what a short they are improving ing. The plot sense has been to what a short they are improving ing. The plot sense has been to what a short they are improving ing. The plot sense has been to what a short they are improving ing. The plot sense has been to what a short they are improving ing. The plot sense has been to what a short they are improving ing. The plot sense has been to what a short they are improving ing. The plot sense has been to what a short they are improving ing. The plot sense has been to what a short they are improving ing. The plot sense has been to say whether they are improving ing. The plot sense has been to say whether they are improving ing. The plot sense has been to say whether they are improving ing. The plot sense has been to say whether they are improving ing. The plot sense has been to say whether they are improving ing. The plot sense has been to say whether they are improving ing. The plot sense has been to say whether they are improving ing. The plot sense has been to say whether they are improving in the time for the public at large. The plot sense has been to say whether they are improving in the time for the public at large. The plot sense has been to say whether they are improving in the time for the public at large. The plot sense has been to say whether they are improving in the time for the public at large. The plot sense has been to say whether they are improving in the time for the public at large. The plot sense has been

HOLWORTH

HALL

unstudied, unedited nature of the mest ton—the list of makers of short story. Bill Jones of Oklahoma is real stuff in trades that call for no training. One brilliant of actual talk. his old duds, but he is a poor piece of us a clergyman or on afternoy or a The prime reason why our short goods if you squeeze him into Howelle's newspaper man to-day, and to-morrow Irvin Cobb Turns Critic.

Perhaps of the writers taking part in the symposium, the one who swung in the symposium, the one who swung in the caper supped in a tree prime reason why our short sounds and you supped in a stories are best is that the magazines dress suit and stick a monoche in his a literary mill thoughty and to-morrow dress suit and stick a monoche in his a literary mill thoughty and to-morrow dress suit and stick a monoche in his a literary mill thoughty and to-morrow dress suit and stick a monoche in his a literary mill thoughty and to-morrow dress suit and stick a monoche in his a literary mill thoughty and to-morrow dress suit and stick a monoche in his a literary mill thoughty and to-morrow dress suit and stick a monoche in his a literary mill thoughty and to-morrow dress suit and stick a monoche in his a literary mill thoughty and to-morrow dress suit and stick a monoche in his a literary mill thoughty and to-morrow dress suit and stick a monoche in his a literary mill thoughty and to-morrow dress suit and stick a monoche in his a literary mill thoughty and to-morrow dress suit and stick a monoche in his a literary mill thoughty and to-morrow dress suit and stick a monoche in his a literary mill thoughty and to-morrow dress suit and stick a monoche in his a literary mill thoughty and to-morrow dress suit and stick a monoche in his a literary mill thoughty and to-morrow dress suit and stick a monoche in his stories and stories and stories are supported by the morrow dress suit and stick a monoche in his stories and the stories and the stories are dress suit and stick a monoche in his stories and the stories and the stories are supported by the morrow dress suit and stick a monoche in his stories and the stories and the stories are supported by the morrow dress suit and stick a monoche in his stories and the stories are supported by the stories and the He made it plain that workaday of continuous concentrated effort and ought to be a tip to American novel- of successful novels turned out every

Mystic—had received the conundrums style, he said is to him the writer's in advance, and had noted some opin-lons on the margin, which opinions he levelled at a caller, along with the barrel of a seventy-five centimeter cigar.

Speaking of literary operations, he said is to him the writer's line the decided overpowering help."

Hennett's books (any one of them) don't mean to say that a fine psychological is any better, or to gible percentage of our readers know logical analysis is any better, or to gible percentage of our readers know logical analysis is any better, or to gible percentage of our readers know logical analysis is any better, or to gible percentage of our readers know logical or care about form or style. They are always to be preferred to a fine unpsychological or care about form or style. They are always and the psychological or care about form or style. They are always is any better, or to logical analysis is any better, or to gible percentage of our readers know way of reflecting his environment. In this sense he does not find style decided, overpowering help."

There a fargular device of them is the analysis of them. And the psychological or care about form or style. They are always and the say that a fine psychological or care about form or style. They are always and the say that a fine psychological or care about form or at a style is even better.

There a fargular device of them is the don't mean to say that a fine psychological or care about form or are about

the widest appreciation. He spoke of I do not read enough novels to be much exclusively romance novel writ- tastes.

Henry James. The plot sense has been too. What is an incentive to voice culture. "After the area."

Where America Excels. "Bud ples to herebe statues." | Disputes to now or differenting organization of life. I think the last thing to worry a out latters of life.

plausibility in color was essential in therefore seeks expression in a shorter fiction supremely satisfying to his form than the novel, but that is high-taste, on this account, he admitted, brow dope, and I'll let some other man Meredith doesn't get him very hard, say it.

There are many English writing cursively, without thought, intention would be supremeded as a bad, bad any presence of form or style. The same many English writing cursively, without thought, intention would be supremeded as a bad, bad any presence of form or style. The same many English writing cursively, without thought, intention would be supremeded as a bad, bad any presence of form or style. The same many English writing cursively, without thought, intention would be supremeded as a supremeded as a bad, bad any presence of form or style. The same many English writing cursively, without thought, intention in the same and the same

England has built a big novel export supremely important how he or she

Have we a short story age-American novels will never grow great by applying the attitudes, methods and styles of earlier writers. The greater American novels will be expressions of personal individuality. We pressions of personal individuality. We

portant and true After the

America First.

By CHANNING POLLOCK.

The great trouble with our novellets, Small on Logic videous and the saw with our dramatists, seems to be be greated to correct and the contract of the same with our dramatists, seems to be be greated to correct the contract. Thompson Buchapur, a.-